

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 062208Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1908

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

AMCONSUL CURACAO

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 1494

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, ETRD, SWEL, VE

SUBJECT: THIS WEEK IN VENEZUELA

SUMMARY. ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS MADE A LIGHTNING VISIT AND CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU DEPARTED FEBRUARY 2. AD'S NATIONAL LEADERSHIP REJECTED THE GOV DEVELOPMENT PLAN IN A RIFT BETWEEN THE PARTY AND GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ. THE FOREIGN MINISTER INDICATED THE GOV WILL RAISE THE TRADE BILL WITH THE SECRETARY. A VENAMCHAM DELEGATION IN WASHINGTON CALLED FOR THE REPEAL OF THE TRADE BILL'S OPEC EXCLUSION CLAUSE. AN ANDEAN JUNTA MEETING HERE FAILED TO RESOLVE CURRENT PROBLEMS. VENEZUELAN-TRINIDADIAN TALKS ON BILATERAL PROBLEMS ARE TAKING PLACE. THE URD PARTY IS IN SERIOUS DISARRAY. MIR WON STUDENT ELECTIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ANDES. VENEZUELA HAS DISPATCHED RELIEF ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA. END SUMMARY.

1. THIS WEEK IN CARACAS

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LOCAL INTEREST THIS WEEK CENTERED ON THE OPPOSITION EXPRESSED BY THE AD PARTY'S LEADERSHIP TO THE NEW DEVELOPMENT

PLAN PUT TOGETHER BY GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ (SEE BELOW).
THIS WEEK ALSO SAW THE DEPARTURE OF CANADA'S PRIME MINISTER
TRUDEAU, AFTER A SUCCESSFUL FIVE-DAY VISIT (REPORTED SEPTTEL).

2. AD REJECTS GOV DEVELOPMENT PLAN

THE AD'S NATIONAL EXECUTIVE HAS ASKED PRESIDENT PEREZ
TO POSTPONE A DECISION BY THE CABINET CONCERNING PLAN FIVE
OF THE NATION UNTIL THE PARTY CAN DEBATE IT. AD LEADERS
ARE COMPLAINING THEY WERE NOT CONSULTED WHEN
THE PLAN WAS PREPARED AND OBJECT THAT IT IS INCONSISTENT
WITH PEREZ'S PUBLIC PROMISES AT THE TIME OF HIS 1973
PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. OBSERVERS SEE THE AD REACTION
AS A THINLY-DISGUISED ATTACK ON THE PLAN'S AUTHOR,
CORDIPLAN MINISTER GUMERSINDO RODRIGUEZ, LONG DISTRUSTED
BY PARTY REGULARS.

3. TRADE ACT TO BE RAISED WITH SECRETARY

FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOVAR TOLD REPORTERS FOLLOWING THE
CABINET MEETING FEBRUARY 3 THAT IF THE KISSINGER VISIT
TAKES PLACE SPECIAL ATTENTION WOULD BE DEVOTED TO THE
DISCRIMINATORY U.S. TRADE LAW. ESCOVAR REPORTEDLY STATED,
"IT IS A VERY IMPORTANT MATTER."

4. VENAMCHAM DELEGATION IN WASHINGTON

THE PRESS REPORTS THAT A DELEGATION FROM THE VENEZUELAN-
AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE TOLD THE SENATE FINANCE
COMMITTEE FEBRUARY 5 THAT THE ANTI-OPEC CLAUSE IN THE TRADE
BILL SHOULD BE REPEALED. CHAMBER PRESIDENT THOMAS HUGHES
REPORTEDLY SAID, "IT IS NOT A QUESTION OF GREAT ECONOMIC
BENEFITS FOR VENEZUELA IF IT IS INCLUDED IN THE GENERALIZED
SYSTEM OF TRADE PREFERENCES, BUT RATHER OF A POLICY
IRRITATING TO BILATERAL RELATIONS."

5. ANDEAN JUNTA MET IN CARACAS

THE ANDEAN JUNTA MET IN CARACAS THIS WEEK TO PREPARE THE
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WAY FOR RESOLUTION OF OUTSTANDING PROBLEMS, INCLUDING
CXT AND SECTORAL PROGRAMMING PRIOR TO MINISTERIAL LEVEL
MEETING. THE OUTCOME OF THE MEETING HERE APPEARS TO HAVE
BEEN INDECISIVE.

6. VENEZULAN-TRINIDADIAN TALKS

BILATERAL TALKS COMMENCED FEBRUARY 4 IN CARACAS CONCERNING
FISHING RIGHTS, PETROLEUM, AND MARINE BOUNDARIES. THE
VENEZUELAN SIDE IS HEADED BY FOREIGN AFFAIRS VICE MINISTER

GOMEZ MANTELLINI AND INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE MINES, AGRICULTURE, DEFENSE, AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS MINISTRIES. THE HIGH-LEVEL TRINIDADIAN DELEGATION IS LED BY VICE FOREIGN MINISTER SEIGNOTORET.

7. URD IN DISARRAY

THE DECLINING UNION REPUBLICANA DEMOCRATICA, WHICH OBTAINED ONLY 3 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE 1973 PRESIDENT ELECTIONS, IS SPLIT BY EX-SENATOR LEONARDO MONTEIL ORTEGA, WHO WANTS TO TAKE OVER THE PARTY FROM ITS AGING LEADER JOVITO VILLALBA. MONTIEL'S MANY ENEMIES WITHIN URD ARE TRYING TO EXPELL HIM FROM THE PARTY, AND MONTIEL IS TELLING THE PRESS THEY ARE MENACING HIS LIFE. MONTIEL IS THREATENING TO FOUND HIS OWN PARTY IF HE IS KICKED OUT BY THE URD.

8. MIR WINS ANDEAN STUDENT ELECTIONS

AS IN YEARS PAST, THE MARXIST MIR CAME FIRST IN STUDENT ELECTIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE ANDES IN MERIDA ALTHOUGH ITS WINNING MARGIN OVER THE LEFTIST MAS WAS LESS THAN 100 VOTES. RESULTS BY PARTY WERE MIR, 3,008; MAS, 2,911; AD, 1,138; AND COPEI, 1,093 AND MARKED THE FIRST TIME THAT AD EDGED OUT COPEI AT THIS UNIVERSITY. IN KEEPING WITH THE CURRENT LOW LEVEL OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY AT ALL VENEZUELAN UNIVERSITIES, THE ABSTENTION RATE WAS JUST OVER 50 PERCENT.

9. VENEZUELAN ASSISTANCE TO GUATEMALA

WITHIN 12 HOURS OF FEBRUARY 4'S EARTHQUAKE IN CENTRAL
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AMERICA THE GOV DISPATCHED AN AIR FORCE C-130 TO GUATEMALA WITH 20 TONS OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES AS WELL AS MEDICAL PERSONNEL. THE DISASTER HAS ROUSED WIDE SYMPATHY HERE.

10. OTHER REPORTING

OTHER SUBJECTS REPORTED SEPARATELY INCLUDE FOREIGN MINISTER ESCOVAR'S REMARKS TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS (CARACAS 1237), AN ASSESSMENT OF VENEZUELAN PERCEPTIONS OF THE U.S. (CARACAS 1313), THE AGUILAR/HERRERA TRIUMPH AT COPEI'S NATIONAL CONVENTION (CARACAS 1257), VENEZUELAN REACTION TO CUBA'S INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA (CARACAS 1212), A REPORTED OIL PURCHASE CONTRACT BY A JAPANESE CONSORTIUM (CARACAS 1166), VENEZUELAN OIL SALES TO CANADA (CARACAS 1426), THE TRUDEAU VISIT (CARACAS 1425), PRESIDENT PEREZ'S COMMENTS ON THE U.S. REACTION TO OIL NATIONALIZATION (CARACAS 1377) AND RELATIONS WITH CUBA (CARACAS 1451).
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